

Christine Joyce

From: William Mullin [WMullin@wcu.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 23, 2013 5:57 PM
To: Board of Selectmen
Subject: FW: A PLAN FOR THE FARM
Attachments: MorrisonFinalPlan.pdf

Hello Board Members-

- I look forward to visiting with you on Monday night about the Morrison Farm. I know we have sent over some sketched drawings showing how we have modified the plans based on input from the organic gardeners and others.
- John Earle, one of the gardeners, took the time to advocate for some changes and, I am very pleased to report, that the Morrison Farm Committee endorsed his concepts. Should a Phase II agricultural/livestock proposal come forward at a later time, the siting of the building can accomodate that type of program.
- Please see John Earle's e-mail about his ideas, below.
- To my mind, this plan does not change the overall thrust of the plan: the costs are still the same and the elements are still the same, but, for sure, the siting of the Community Gathering Building is different. Also, keeping the relationship between the new barnlike structure and the house is an important part of our focus on the history of the farm.
- Those concepts have taken the initial form that we sent to you in your packet; on Monday, you will see these in more formalized architectural and landscape architectural contexts.
- All along, our Morrison Farm Committee has been open to new ideas and suggestions and this is a great example of that.
- The Morrison Farm Committee has unanimously endorsed the architectural interpretations of John Earle's Plan.

Sincerely,

Bill Mullin

From: William Mullin
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 11:44 AM
To: mc@acton-ma.gov
Cc: John Earle (john@johnearlephoto.com); Tom Tidman (ttidman@acton-ma.gov); cfochtman@acton-ma.gov; Bill Dickinson (bill@nasharch.com); dickinsondesign@gmail.com; Tom Ryan (tryan@ryan-assoc.com)
Subject: FW: A PLAN FOR THE FARM

Hello Morrison Farm Committee-

1. Attached is the "John Earle Plan" for the siting of the building and preparation of the space for future agricultural/livestock management uses.

2. I am very grateful to John for spending a lot of time to both articulate his point of view, but also to work with Tom Ryan and the Dickinsons to help formalize his ideas a bit. Please note that no member of the Morrison Farm Committee worked on these drawings, so there was no deliberation.
3. Tonight, I would like to discuss the John Earle Plan, and, if you agree, vote to change our basic site plan to incorporate this change. To my mind, this plan does not change the overall thrust of the plan: the costs are still the same and the elements are still the same, but, for sure, the siting of the Community Gathering Building is different. Also, keeping the relationship between the new barnlike structure and the house is an important part of our focus on the history of the farm.
4. Regrettably, I feel circumscribed in what I can say in this e-mail, so I will talk with you all tonight. However, I am very pleased to have received this input from John and the organic gardening community and look forward to our response.
5. In a minute, I will send over to you the sketched out landscape, grading and architectural plans for your review, prior to the meeting.

Thank you again, John!!

Best,

Bill

From: John Earle [mailto:john@johnnearlephoto.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 11:29 AM

To: William Mullin

Subject: A PLAN FOR THE FARM

Hello MFC

Bill has been kind enough to listen to my ideas and move forward to make things a bit more concrete than a crude spread sheet plan (New version attached with notes: apologies to all architects). Let me preface this by saying, for the record, if the plan stays pretty much the way it is at present, then, for what it is worth, I have gone from "your nuts, no building" to "this could be really cool". I would also like to thank the committee for being patient, flexible, and for listening.

CONCEPT: (please pardon the cut and paste style from other emails and any typos and the like ...I am on vacation):

I wanted to share an idea I had that, to my mind, ameliorates all major criticism (Gardeners, Historical Society, and other recalcitrant constituents), covers all aspects of the master plan you have presented (parking, building etc), utilizes the farmhouse, and adds a dimension to the project which enhances both the historical precedent, community involvement, philanthropic possibilities, youth involvement, and generally creates a powerful community magnet which probably can be realized within the current budgetary constraints.

The core concept here is informed by the "RED LINE" on the spreadsheet. The idea is to create a boundary between Morrison Farm and everything else. Please note the asphalt road stops at the corner of the barn and becomes gravel or some such material: a necessary turn around for emergency vehicles is gravel as well. This should be walking

environment for the community: not a driving one (except for mowers, tractors, compost delivery and the like).

The parking lot drawn into the last illustration remains, bermed on two sides to minimize the visual impact both to the road and the garden, while maintaining reasonable parking. Other parking resources are the Icehouse Pond lot: the cemetery lot by the soccer fields and, perhaps last resort, overflow on the bordering cemetery lot. This last part needs no development except mowing, so when and if the cemetery is expanded, that area is easily relinquished. The cemetery commission retains all prerogatives. I know this is a contentious suggestion, but, as I said to one correspondent: maybe if we ask nicely. Bill has convinced me that the upper and lower parking pads should be connected to create flow in and out the the parking area. It would be great to have "green" borders to the upper lot as show on the diagram.

Beyond are some simple husbandry possibilities: I repeat Simple ... chickens and sheep ... maybe rabbits, to be used more as teaching tools than producers. The sheep would be a wonderful way to include people of all ages. Watching the shearing (there are professionals who will do this), having the wool processed, and then creating opportunities to spin, loom, and knit. Education and production of items to donate or sell. The chickens produce eggs (not meat); a simple thing for people of all ages to harvest and prepare, again, for donations or sale. The footprint for shelter already exists. There should be no need for a "barn"

Concurrent with this idea is organizing the garden as a resource for vegetables to be sold or donated. The asian community already does this. There is an amazing amount of surplus in the gardens, especially squash, tomatoes, beans, and snow peas. Modeling on "Gaining Ground" in Concord, why not harvest the surplus for sale or philanthropic use. . That pipeline might even encourage the planting of crops that could be shared. Again, a great possibility for youth involvement. I would also encourage the possibility of handicapped gardening (see entrance on the plan). I think, with 4x4 raised beds (a proven gardening idea), that we could create a wonderful, creative, and probably therapeutic opportunity.

And who you might ask is going to manage all this? The person living in the farmhouse. I have been inside: it is a great and useable little house. For a negotiated rent subsidy, and perhaps a stipend of some sort, he/she/they could be in charge of animals, building maintenance, mowing, and other tasks to be defined. Think a manageable "Codman Farm". Far better than a vacant building.

BARN

Building a structure that replicates the basic shape and mass respects the authentic landscape makes the most sense to me. So,,, my idea was to take the barn down, replicate the south and east sides (that would be the sides facing the house and the garden) as well as the shape and mass of the existing structure. Effectively this is no

different than renovating the old structure. One could perhaps use some of the old timber or barn doors on the new barn to further authenticate the new building.

I personally like the idea of the wing that goes along the cemetery border. It is certainly appropriate to the site, is invisible from the house and road, and creates a more flexible interior (making it more useful to more people). Aesthetically, it frames that corner of the park. The terrace formed in the resulting corner would be yet another natural gathering space: protected, sunny, and welcoming. I love that space and believe it too will maximize the "gathering potential" of the building. I would entreat the powers that be to keep the terrace natural and invisible. perhaps flagstone or some such and not build a deck. To me this would be a simple and cheaper way to maintain the natural feel of things.

On the walls facing the terrace; I would install VERY large, multi-paned windows (not large picture windows) so that where ever you are in the building you are always aware of the wonderful landscape we all have preserved in all seasons. Regarding the height of the building; I would hope the elevation of the barn would remain the same and that the addition be maintained at the same level. The handicap access and handicap parking would be on the high pad across from the house. I believe this would entail no ramps except the existing one (the grade) to the garden. Keeping the structures "higher" on the site keeps the terrace up high and would make the views from the building far more dramatic. That perspective includes every facet of the land that we all love. I believe Tom Ryan's latest diagram allows for this (see topo lines).

The more you can bring the view into the building the better. Anywhere on the North and east side that you can create transparency should be optimized. thus the large multipaned window in the diagram. To love that room and to draw people to it; the view should be amazing.

The meeting space should function simply as a gathering place with maximum flexibility. Think contra dancing, acoustic music concerts, lectures (historical, scientific etc), harvest parties and yes weddings and bar/bat mitzvah's(think \$\$\$)/ We just had one at the Scout house in Concord, and that space would be my model. To turn it into a museum with displays is just plain inflexible and boring ... yes boring. I can feel my museum legs beginning to twitch just thinking about it. My recommendation is to somehow tell the story with beautiful, artful panels on the walls. They can serve as decoration as well as be informative. but PLEASE leave the space free and possible. It should be living monument to the past ... and not a static one. I love the Fireplace but it would be great to have some kind of platform (perhaps mobile and collapsible) where performers and speakers could stand above the crowd.

Entrance: My idea was to maintain the visual of the wall to the street for historical authenticity. I am sure having a "main" entrance makes sense and do not feel strongly about the historical aspect except as a way to diffuse opposition; but I would hope that those entrances would be somehow disguised as something characteristic of "barns" so

that the building doesn't end up looking like a movie theater. The motif of the barn door might work here.

CONCLUSION:

I believe that these ideas transform a passive and neutral solution to a dynamic and inclusive one. Rather than just a simple recreation area, this scenario creates a site that is historically relevant and serves as a model of civic pride and possibility while retaining all the self sustaining revenue possibilities. The opportunity for youth to understand the sources and processes involved in sustaining a community are invaluable. In a word, everything you have imagined and so much more.

My apologies for the length here. couldn't figure another way to do it. Thank you very much for even getting this far. I look forward to hearing your thoughts

John Earle

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